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[facing p. 1 (b)]

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GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

From the drought-and flood-harassed northwestern Honan Province to verdant, tropical Hainan Island, this region embraces a wide geographical variety. The depth of 32 degrees of latitude (4° - 36° N.) exceeds that of the United States by about 10 degrees; its area of 1,166,000 square kilometers (451,000 sq. mi.), ranking fourth in size among all the regions in China, is three times the territory of Japan, and equals the combined areas of England, France, Italy, Holland, Denmark, and Luxembourg. 131

This region consists of Honan, Hupeh, Hunan, Kiangsi, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi provinces.

I. TOPOGRAPHY

A. Mountains

Topographically, this region, from north to south, includes southern fringes of the North China plain, the major alluvial plains of the Yangtze and the Han rivers studded with a few towering mountains, the alluvial plains of the Tungting and Poyang lakes, the South Yangtze hills, and the hills of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and a narrow strip of flat land along the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea. 133

The region presents a general west-to-east decline with the main mountain ranges of 3,000 feet or over on the western side of the region. The Fu-niu Mountain of the Pei-ling system overlooks the region from the northwest; the Wu-tang, Wu-shan, and Hsüeh-feng Mountains form the western boundary, leading to the Yunnan-Kweichow tableland at the southwestern corner. On the east side, a few moun-

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tains of lesser altitude, the Ta-pien, Huai-yu, and Wu-i, help define the limits of the region on the east. The only range that separates the southern third of the region from the rest is the Nan-ling system, which enters from the west as Tu-p'ang-ling, reaches the center of the region as Ta-yü-ling, and emerges in the east to join the Wu-i.

B. Rivers

The turbulent Yellow River cuts across the northern tip of this region, but the main river systems dominating this area are composed of, from north to south, the Hwai, the Yangtze, and the Hsi (West River; known in its lower reaches as the Pearl River).

The Yellow River enters this region from the northwest, where it forms the boundary between Shansi and Honan provinces and where the river is walled between the T'ai-hang and the Ch'in-ling mountain ranges. As it rushes eastward past Meng-chin, its water is suddenly unleashed onto the North China plain. It is choked with silt from the loess highlands, and in many places its bed is higher than the surrounding land. It has changed its course many times in history, and over 1,600 inundations have been caused by breaks in the dikes. Since 1949 the dikes on the Yellow River in this region have been repaired and strengthened and at least one major flood-control project has been undertaken west of Kaifeng.

The upper reaches of the Hwai with its numerous tributaries constitute the major water supply in Honan Province. However, the Hwai River also

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threatens inhabitants of this area with floods, especially as it flows eastward to Anhwei and Kiangsu; it is on this river that the Peking regime in the winter of 1950 began a historic five-year flood-control project to alter the age-old sequence of "big rain, big disaster; little rain, little disaster; and no rain, drought disaster."[1]

Like the Yellow River, the Yangtze also enters this region from the west, carving out deep gorges through the Wu-shan Range, where the river is imprisoned within tremendous canyon walls, which rise a sheer 2,000 feet in some places.[2] West of I-ch'ang the swiftness of the current is greatly reduced and the river is navigable for boats up to 1,000 tons.[3] Steamers up to 6,000 tons (10,000 tons in the summer) regularly ply the waters between I-ch'ang and Hankow; a flood-diversion project was completed in 1952 -- a project which, it is claimed, will be effective in preventing floods for the next twenty to forty years.[4]

The Hsi River constitutes the main line in the river system of the southernmost part of this region. At Wu-chou, in Kwangsi Province, the river is about half a mile wide. Its navigability from here eastward is curtailed only by the relatively great fluctuation of the water level (an extreme variation of 75 feet).[5]

1. Chih Huai /The Harnessing of the Hwai River/, Shanghai, Hua-tung jen-min Ch'u-pan-she, 1952.
2. George B. Cressey, China's Geographic Foundations, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1934, p. 280.
3. Ibid., p. 283.
4. Ou-yang An, Ching-chiang Fen-hung, /Diverting the Flood of the Ching River/, Shanghai, Hsin chih-shih ch'u-pan-she, 1954, p. 73.
5. Cressey, op. cit., p. 349.

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The lower course of the Hsi River, also called the Pearl River, receives water from the Pei River in the north and the Tung River in the east. Both the Pei and Tung rivers are partially navigable in high-water seasons. Upon the crisscrossing waterways of the delta at the mouth of the Pearl River, water transportation has been developed to a high degree. The delta, Kwangtung's only flatland of any size, has the greatest density of population in China -- 2,900 per square mile.[6] 133 [261]

In addition to the several main rivers, lesser waterways which feed the two largest lakes in China, Tungting and Poyang, are of considerable volume and cover a large area in the middle of the region. The Hsiang, Tzu Yüan and Li Rivers empty into Tungting Lake, filling it in summer until it becomes a 2,000 square-mile body of water, which is reduced one-third in size in the winter. This annual fluctuation in volume formerly caused frequent damage, but the Peking regime claims that three separate hydraulic projects in the lake region assure the inhabitants a growing season free from drought or flood. The Poyang Lake in Kiangsi Province, fed by the Kan River and its tributaries, covers an area of 1,730 square miles. But accumulation of silt has been steadily reducing its capacity, and summer waters have often flooded the adjacent land. The flood threat on Poyang Lake, according to the Peking regime, has been reduced since the completion of the new dikes and

6. Ibid., p. 362.

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repair of the old.[7]

Perhaps the most interesting topographical feature of this region is that, with the exception of the two southernmost provinces, each of the other provinces occupies a natural basin with its center in a main river valley or lake. To be sure, these basins are not of perfect geotectonic formation, but the general orientation of the mountains does yield a few level centers. Here the populations of these provinces concentrate and the separate river systems converge. South of the Nan-ling Range, however, the hills crowd out the level land, which is estimated at less than 10 per cent of the total area.[8]

The coastline of Kwangtung and Kwangsi Provinces is China's southern gateway to the outside world, but, despite its length (estimates range between 1,200 and 5,000 kilometers, or 750-3,100 miles), the coast is isolated from the hinterland by mountains. New highways and railways are under construction. These developments will link the inland provinces with some of the promontories and bays which are protected by 562 large and small islands, thus promising excellent maritime transportation and exploitation.[9]

C. South-China Sea Islands

The island of Hainan tilts toward the north.

7. Chung-hua Jen-min Kung-ho-kuo Fen-sheng Ti-t'u /Atlas of the People's Republic of China/, Shanghai, Ti-t'u ch'u-pan-she, August, 1953.

8. Cressey, op. cit., p. 348.

9. Hsü Chün-ming, Fu-jao Ti Hua-nan /The Rich South China/, Canton, 1951, p. 12.

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Its highest mountain (the Wu-chih-shan, 1, 350 m. or 4, 320 ft.) stands in the central south, while the northern one-third is rather flat. The main rivers on the island are the Nan-tu, which flows northward and is navigable for boats up to 20 tons on its lower reaches and the Wan-ch'üan, which flows eastward. 133

Geological evidence indicates that at one time Hainan Island, fifteen miles off the Kwangtung coast, was connected with the Lei-chou Peninsula. Today, the strait is extremely shallow, and the port of Hai-k'ou (Hoihow) on Hainan, facing the Lei-chou Peninsula, is of little value because of its shallowness and the rough water which blocks its entrance. Ships must anchor a mile offshore. Whenever the wind is high, passengers debarking are lowered into launches by a crane-operated basket. The southern coast of the island offers better harbor prospects with its port of Yü-lin.[10] 504

The extent of China's claim to jurisdiction over the South China Sea has been a matter of long-standing dispute. The official Peking description includes within its territorial waters the sea almost to the shores of the Philippines and Borneo, reaching as far south as 4° North Latitude.[11] Wider in the north and tapering toward the south, this sea claimed by China covers roughly 650, 000 sqaure miles, or an area about eight times the size of Kwangtung Province. Within this body of water are located hundreds of small islets and shoals, of 131 133

10. Ch'en Chih, Hai-nan Hsin-chih [The New Geography of Hainan], Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1949.

11. Jen-min Jih-pao [People's Daily], Peking, August 16, 1951.

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which 160 bear definite names.[12] 131 133

These islands fall into four groups: (a) the Tung-sha group, also known as Pratus. The main island, Tung-sha (about 2.7 sq. mi. in size), lies only 170 nautical miles southeast of Hong Kong and is a center for commercial fishing; (b) the Hsi-sha group, also known as Paracel, about 144 miles from the island of Hainan. The largest island in this group is Yung-hsing (0.7 sq. mi.); (c) the chung-sha group to the east of the Hsi-sha, which is hardly more than a cluster of submerged shoals; (d) the Nan-sha group, the most extensive of the four, some of its far-flung rocks only 434 miles from the Chung-sha. Of this last group, the largest is T'ai-p'ing Island (0.044 sq. mi.), but prime importance should be attached to Nan-wei Island, which could be developed as a strategic harbor. Rich phosphorous resources and marine products are common features of these islands.[13] [135]

The ambiguous status of these islands is indicated by the fact that for centuries the Chung-sha (Central Sand) group was known to the Chinese as Nan-sha (Southern Sand), while the present Nan-sha had borne the designation of T'uan-sha (Mass of Sand). Apparently the Chinese considered the Chung-sha group the southernmost territory and were not very much concerned with jurisdiction over T'uan-sha. The 1951 Japanese Peace Treaty, to which Communist China was not a party, stipulates that Japan forfeits her claim over these islands, but fails to specify under which country their adminstra- 648

12. Hsü Chün-ming, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

13. Ibid., pp. 9-12.

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(9,700 ft.) in length, is the largest of its kind in China. West and east of the bridge is the flood-diversion project, for which a main dike to harness the Yellow River was completed in 1951. At Chengchow, the present provincial capital of Honan, the Lunghai Railway intersects the Peking-Hankow Railway. Its location at the junction of two of China's main railroads contributes greatly to Chengchow's position as the largest cotton market in this section of the country. The Peking-Hankow Railway beyond Chengchow runs due south and leaves Honan Province to enter Hupeh through a strategic tunnel a few miles south of Hsin-yang.

The first key city on the Lunghai Railway in eastern Honan Province is Shang-ch'iu, where a part of the extensive flood-control system for the Hwai Valley is located. Both Shang-ch'iu and Kaifeng to the west are ancient cities. At present Kaifeng still ranks among the four top commercial centers in China. Farthern west the Lunghai Railway passes through Chengchow to Loyang, another ancient metropolis often mentioned in history and classic literature.

Some geography books include the Pai River basin, in southwestern Honan Province, among the most extensive river basins in China. The area of the basin is not as large as the Chengtu Basin in West China which supported the Nationalist Government and almost all of its troops during World War II, but the Pai River region is a clearly defined basin. In the basin's center is

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Nan-yang, which has a well-developed network of highways extending south to Hupeh Province, west to Shensi Province, and into all parts of Honan Province. 361 489 133

Wuhan, the largest municipality in Central China and the provincial capital of Hupeh, comprises the tri-city of Wuchang, east of the Yangtze River; Hankow, north of the Han River and west of the Yangtze; and Haryand, south of the Han River. A 1952 estimate placed the population of Wuhan at 1,200,000. Of the three parts of Wuhan, Hankow was a center of bristling political activities in the 1920's when the Nationalist and Communist parties quarreled through their first short-lived coalition, and both parties were, at the same time, torn with internal strife. At Hanyang, an ordnane plant that has done a great deal for China's growing armament is being expanded under Communist direction. In this community, sprawling over the confluence of the Han and Yangtze rivers, a large-scale reconstruction program has been launched to remodel the parks and to build a people's square, a worker's cultural palace, a martyr's memorial, and other structures for public use. 361 489 [162] [389]

In August 1955, the plan for a modern railway bridge on the Yangtze River at Wuhan was reaching its final stage. When this bridge is completed there will be direct connection between the Peking-Hankow and Hankow-Canton railways.

The section of the Yangtze River in Hupeh Province is navigable for river steamers all year round. West of I-ch'ang, the Yangtze River flows through the famous gorges, which pose a difficult problem for the most experienced navigator. The Communist press has repor-

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2:Ling & Ruey--48e E-5 (1933) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5
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Illus. 2. Sketch Map of the Topography of the Miao Frontier

2:Ling & Ruey--56a E-5 (1933) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

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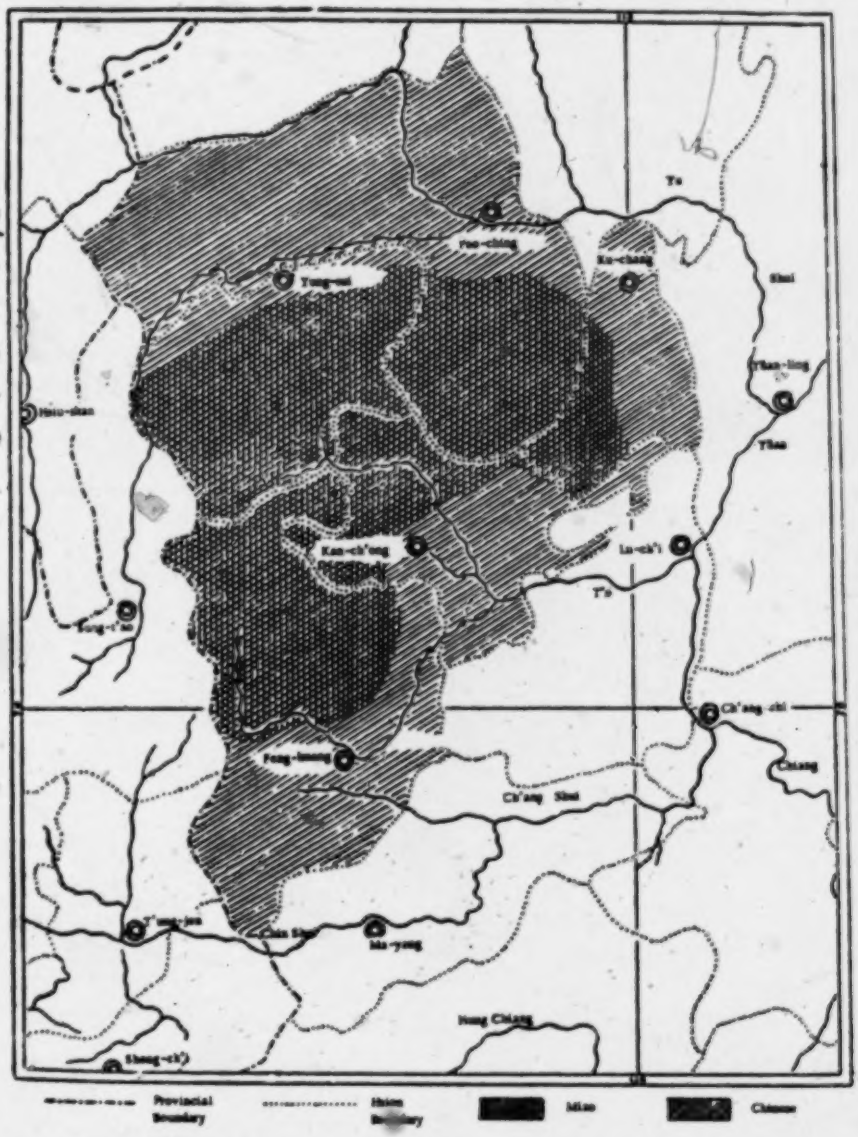

Illustration 5. Map of the Distribution of the Chinese and Miao in the Five Hsien of Peng-huang, Kan-ch'eng, Yung-yu, Pao-ching, and Ko-chang.

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li to Ta-pi-liu, another ten li to Ch'e-ch'i, and 30 more li to Ho Ch'i. From the mouth of the river to Ho Ch'i, some 130 li, the waterway is known as the Wu Ch'i River. Above Ho Ch'i it divides into two branches, south and north: the northern branch, known as the Wan-yung Chiang, runs ten li to Chang-p'ai-chai, where it again divides into two more branches, one flowing westward as the Wan-yung Chiang proper, passing through Ta-chuang and Hsiao-chuang for 50 li to Kan-ch'eng. The other branch, which flows northwestward, is known as Kao-yen Ho, and goes 15 li to Chen-ch'i-so, 15 li to Hsien-chen-ying, ten li to Chen-ning-ying, 20 li to P'ing-lang, five li to Wei-che, eight li to Hsün-chien-p'ing, 20 li to Kao-yen-hsin. The branch flowing south of Ho Ch'i, known as the T'o Chiang, flows through Ch'i-k'ou, Chiang-chün-yen, and Mao Chou to Lao-hu-k'ou for about 60 li, and then passing Lao-hu-k'ou it flows from Mu-lung-ti Chiang to Feng-huang for another 70 li.

The parts of the T'ung Ho navigable by small craft are: the Wu Ch'i, 113 li; the Wan-yung Chiang, 60 li; /Illus. 16, 17 on pp. 42, 43/ /44/ the Kao-yen Ho, 93 li; and the T'o Chiang, 130 li; totaling 296 li in all. These river courses are difficult to navigate and are not passable all year round. Miao Fang-pei Lan in the section on roads and waterways says: "This river (the T'ung Ho) has precipitous cliffs standing up like daggers, strange rocks clustering like a forest of spears, and rioting cataracts. Through slight negligence a boat can be crashed into pieces. It dries up in autumn and winter, causing difficulty in transportation. It is only in summer when mountain streams rush down from the Miao villages, that small craft may ply here and there. However, the cliffs and rocks become more dangerous as the water rises. Once a sandbank is reached, a day is often spent in lifting the boat across to deep water. The difficulty of crossing such banks is twice as much as in other rivers."

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The Ch'en Chiang waterway starts from the city of Ch'en-ch'i-hsien and joins the Lo-hao Ch'i /tributary/ at Kao-ts'un

[text continues on p. 70]